

# ANCIENT PEAKS WINERY

## 2012 MERLOT

MARGARITA VINEYARD | PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA

### OVERVIEW

Merlot excels at our estate Margarita Vineyard and has been a mainstay in our small family of wines since day one. Here, ancient sea bed soils combine with a long growing season to yield a Merlot with silky dark fruit flavors and a luscious texture, resulting in what has become one of the Paso Robles region's most notable Merlots.

### VINEYARD

We blend fruit from three different Merlot blocks that exhibit a range of distinct qualities, bringing added natural complexity and dimension to the finished wine. These blocks are situated along the slopes of an uplifted ancient sea bed, where the well-drained, calcium-rich soils are distinguished by decomposing oyster fossils. Block 7 yields dark, intensely flavored fruit with both softness and power. Block 4 produces lighter red fruit qualities with lively acidity, while Block 5 splits the difference with a blend of black and red fruit characteristics. Margarita Vineyard stands alone as the southernmost vineyard in the Paso Robles AVA, nestled into the rugged Santa Lucia Mountain Range just 14 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The mountains tower over the property's western flank as testaments to the tectonic forces that blessed Margarita Vineyard with a rare diversity of soils. The peaks also act as a gateway between the cool marine air to the south and warm inland conditions to the north. This phenomenon creates one of the coolest growing environments in the Paso Robles region, resulting in fruit of uncommon depth and structure.

### WINEMAKING

Our aim is to produce a pure expression of the varietal with a rounded, velvety structure that speaks to Margarita Vineyard. After destemming, the lots were cold soaked up to 72 hours prior to fermentation for a gentle extraction of initial color and flavor. After fermentation and gentle pressing, the lots were aged for 18 months in a combination of French (65%) and American (35%) oak barrels, 25 percent of which featured new oak. Small lots of estate Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon were incorporated into the final blend. The Malbec brings juiciness to the mid-palate, while Cabernet Sauvignon enhances the wine's structure.

### TASTING NOTES

The 2012 Merlot presents ample aromas of blueberry and plum with hints of vanilla, tobacco and baking spice. The palate is round and velvety, offering flavors of cherry, blackberry and mocha. Notes of oak and cinnamon join plump tannins on a rich, juicy finish.

### CUISINE PAIRING

The velvety richness of the 2012 Merlot is an excellent match for grilled pork chops, rack of lamb with rosemary butter, herb-rubbed beef tenderloin, and aged cheddar cheese.



### VINEYARD:

*Margarita Vineyard*

### VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

*Merlot 85%*

*Malbec 13%*

*Cabernet Sauvignon 2%*

### HARVEST DATES:

*October 3 (Blocks 4 & 5)*

*October 18 (Block 7)*

*October 9 (Malbec)*

*October 18 (Cabernet Sauvignon)*

### AGING REGIMEN:

*18 months in French and American oak barrels*

### FINAL ANALYSIS:

*Alcohol: 14.5%*

*TA: .69*

*pH: 3.42*

### CASES PRODUCED:

*4,501*



*Merlot*